DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 149 EA 008 483

AUTHOR Salinas, Alicia M.
TITLE Responding to Community Needs.
INSTITUTION Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, Tex.
PUB DATE [Apr 76]
NOTE 5p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Involvement; Educational Assessment; Educational Needs; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation; *Needs Assessment; School Districts
IDENTIFIERS CEP; *Comprehensive Education Plan

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the development process of a Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) for one Texas school district. The Center for the Management of Innovation in Multicultural Education (MIME) is assisting the Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District to develop a comprehensive plan that will answer the whole community's educational needs. The project consists of four phases: (1) planning and organizing for self-study and evaluation that involves representatives of the community as well as the schools; (2) projecting and designing a school program for the next five years to meet assessed needs; (3) developing a five-year implementation plan; and (4) securing approval of the plan from the steering committee (composed of students, parents, teachers, and administrators), the superintendent, and the school board. (Author/DS)

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RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

by Alicia M. Salinas

Intercultural Development
Research Association

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The Center for the Management of Innovation in Multicultural Education (MIME) is providing technical assistance to the Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District in the development of a Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) that will be responsive to the community's educational needs. A. B. Elizalde, superintendent, has appointed Alfredo del Barrio, curriculum director, and Roberto Zarate, ESAA program director, to direct the project.

Assistance has been provided in the design of the planning strategy, in the training of personnel for implementation of those strategies and in the identification of resources. Abelardo Villarreal, CEP manager for MIME, has designed the strategies for planning, organizing and coordinating the CEP effort.

The Edcouch-Elsa district has made all decisions regarding the CEP and has committed personnel to formulate the CEP. The plan, coordinated with a self-study and evaluation, will also contain the following elements:

1) the statement of the school district's plan for self-study and improvements;

2) a response to the cultural and linguistic needs of a heterogeneous school population;

3) statements from current research and thought regarding content, methodologies and techniques that have been found to be successful;

4) innovative approaches for meeting needs and

5) a five-year plan for implementing the innovations.

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Planning, organization and implementation strategies have been utilized to coordinate this very important project. The work on the project will be accomplished in four phases:

Phase 1 Planning and organizing for a self-study and evaluation (completed);

Phase 2 Projecting and designing a school program for the next five years (completed);

Phase 3 Prioritizing and developing a five year implementation plan that includes process and product evaluation (in progress) and

Phase 4 Approving, publishing and disseminating the plan (in progress).

Phase 1: Planning and Organizing

A Steering Committee composed of students, parents, teachers, principals and other administrators was appointed. Their role was to provide leadership and training to the different committees organized to provide information in the following areas:

. district-wide goals and objectives,

. school and community,

. curriculum,

. guidance services,

. instructional media,

. facilities,

. staff and administration and

. school services.

The Steering Committee assisted in planning and organizing by:

1) identifying the roles and responsibilities of the various entities participating in the development of the CEP,

2) identifying tasks,

3) organizing timelines and

4) selecting staff responsible for completion of tasks.

Phase 2: Projecting and Designing

The School-Community Committee was responsible for conducting a demographic study of the district with five year projections. An assessment of student needs was also made before the Philosophy and Goals Committee was able to formulate a district-wide educational philosophy and determine student goals. The philosophy and goals were approved by the School Board and by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) before being disseminated to all other committees. This provided guidance and insured continuity in all subsequent committee activities.

The Subject Area Committees composed of teachers, students and principals at the elementary, junior high and high schools provided the basic information for the reports. The committees used the questionnaires provided in Evaluative Criteria published by National Study of School Evaluation to begin their search into "what was happening" at the schools. MIME personnel formulated a procedure for organizing the information. Participants were asked to write a rationale for including that subject area in the school program. They were also asked to describe an ideal program and document the status quo. Discrepancies identified were converted into needs. The needs were then prioritized on the basis of size and importance.

Once the needs were identified, school personnel were asked to design a program with objectives and activities that would meet those needs.

The information provided by the Subject Area Committee was used by the Curriculum, the Media Services, the School-Staff-Administration, the Guidance Services, Student Services and Facilities Committees. These committees documented the resources needed to implement the new program.

Phase 3: Developing the Plan

Once all reports have been completed, reviewed and edited, the Steering Committee will prioritize needs. The Committee will set short-range and long-range goals to be accomplished during the next five years. The implementation plan will include a management scheme which will provide the school district with alternative strategies for meeting established goals.

The implementation plan will provide both a process and product evaluation design. It will establish a system for modification of the plan during the implementation stage, and will evaluate student outcomes.

Phase 4: Approving the Plan

Approval of all reports will be done by the Steering Committee. The final plan will need to be approved by the Steering Committee, the Superintendent and the School Board. Once the Comprehensive Education Plan is approved, it will be published and disseminated to all campuses. A copy of the plan will be sent to TEA. Other copies will be available to the public at the central office.

The MIME staff and the Edcouch-Elsa ISD feel that all who have participated in this study have made worthy contributions to the district and to the education of students in the district.